

Report of the Head of Operations Support

9. Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the background and progress of the ESMCP
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Recommendations

Recommended the Committee notes that:

- i) the current national contracts for critical mobile communications for the 3 emergency services are due to expire from 2016;***
- ii) future contracts will be delivered by the Government's Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme from 2015; and***
- iii) a report will be brought to a future meeting of the Committee detailing any resource implications for the Authority.***

Introduction

2. The Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) is a cross-government, multiagency programme led by the Home Office. It will deliver a new contract for critical mobile communications to all 3 emergency services (3ES) and other users throughout Great Britain using the latest proven technologies providing the delivery of public safety features and on-demand data services. The ESMCP solution will be called the Emergency Services Network (ESN).
3. The Emergency Services Network will provide the emergency services and others with critical voice and broadband data capacity which could replace those delivered under current contract(s), this includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the contracts currently provided by Airwave Solutions Limited. The Service will be required to join the ESN to ensure interoperability with the other emergency services.
4. The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) is at the forefront of the delivery of this programme and is representing all fire services to ensure that the ESN is fit for purpose and meets the needs of Fire and Rescue Service communications.

Background

5. A number of service contracts are currently in operation across the 3ES and the expiration of the contracts begins from 2016 through to 2020.
6. The procurement of the ESN is planned to begin at the start of 2014 with new service contracts expected to be awarded during the summer 2015 to facilitate service delivery as the existing service contracts expire.
7. It is envisaged the ESN will also provide the 3ES with a choice when considering the purchase of existing commercially available mobile telephony services.
8. The ESMCP may also replace the current main scheme radio communication service delivered by Airwave with a new national mobile communication service for all 3 emergency services and other organisations that use the Airwave service. ESN will take advantage of the latest mobile technologies to provide a national critical voice and broadband data services.

Progress

9. The ESMCP strategic outline business case was approved in October 2012 and the programme is developing an outline business case for approval by quarter 1 in 2014 in order to be in a position to release an invitation to tender in quarter 2 2014.
10. The programme governance structure includes representation from the three emergency services (and their responsible departments), Cabinet Office, and Welsh and Scottish governments.
11. The three emergency services have been closely involved in developing an understanding of future operational needs as well as defining requirements to provide a system appropriate for the future, especially where data is expected to dominate communications.
12. The ESMCP requirements have been developed following significant engagement with the user community (including this Authority). The requirements build upon and are traceable back to detailed work undertaken by the three emergency services (3ES) during 2012 and further workshops held during 2013 allowing end users to provide input and comment on their business requirements.

Expected Outcomes

13. It is intended that ESN will provide users with a more cost-effective (cheaper), operationally-efficient (better) and demand-led (smarter) service. FRSs will have the opportunity to utilise ESN to provide any of the following:
 - Main scheme Radio
 - Hand Held (fire ground) Radios
 - Mobile telephones

- Mobile devices (tablets)
 - Mobile Data Terminals (MDT)
14. However, the final solution identified for each Service will be at the discretion of each FRS.

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP)

15. ESMCP is working with JESIP to ensure that future solutions enable interoperability. Lessons learned from high-profile incidents have continuously reinforced the need for effective interoperability and also recognised that the achievement of this is only partly about communications technology.

Finance

16. The current Firelink (Airwave) contract was let by Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on a regional basis with costs allocated to individual FRAs based on the number of handsets. There was a recognition that the compulsory use of the Firelink (Airwave) contract had significant cost increases for some Services compared to their legacy systems. This has been compensated for by the payment of a special grant.
17. The full implications are not yet known as the supplier has not been selected however past experience with the Airwave rollout has shown that significant resource will be required to manage the project internally and to deliver the agreed solution.

Conclusion/Summary

18. In 2014 and 2015, the ESMCP will have a significant impact upon HWFRS.
19. The likelihood of any potential resource implications will be monitored and a future report will be brought back to the Committee when such details are known
20. The Service has been and will remain engaged with the Programme to ensure that the requirements of the Service are represented and that the implications of this significant change are fully understood.

Corporate Considerations

This paper is for information only at this stage and further papers will follow when appropriate.

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Yes. Finance, and HR resources will be required. Scale is not yet known
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Links to JESIP, Firefighter safety and public safety
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Interoperability, failure of critical services
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Not Applicable
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Not Applicable

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